



ITI Graduates Leaders for the Church and Society

Where are they now?
Here are some of their stories





INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

in Trumau near Vienna, Austria

The ITI is an Ecclesiastical Theological Faculty with degrees granted by the Holy See, both for the study of theology and for specialized studies on marriage and the family.

The Institute brings together students from all over the world, especially students from Western, Central and Eastern Europe and North and South America, as well as Africa and Asia. It seeks to be a place of interchange between diverse cultures, and a living experience of the Church universal.



In order to offer students from both East and West an education truly suitable to their own roots, the Institute draws on the rich theological traditions of both the East and the West. It strives “to breath with both lungs of the Church” (Pope John Paul II, who was instrumental in founding the ITI). The Greek Fathers and St. Thomas Aquinas serve as particularly central points of reference.

We offer the following degrees:

- STM (equivalent to STB), *Sacrae Theologiae Magister – Magister Theologiae* (Mag. Theol.)
- STL, *Sacrae Theologiae Licentiatius*
- STD, *Sacrae Theologiae Doctor*
- MMF, *Magister in Studiis de Matrimonio et Familia – Master in Studies on Marriage and Family*



INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE
CATHOLIC SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Reaching the Catholic Church in the UK and the USA

Graduate's book inspires the National Office for Vocation of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales; this leads to collaboration on both sides of the Atlantic.

A little book called "Paths of Love" came into the hands of the Rt. Rev. Christopher Jamison, OSB. The book intrigued him so much that he flew to Austria to meet with the author, Reverend Joseph Bolin (STL '07), graduate and professor of the ITI. The two discussed plans for a seminar on the Theology of Vocation. Then, Father Jamison, who is the Director of the National Office for Vocation of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, organized the seminar which took place in the summer of 2012 in England.

Held in collaboration with the ITI and Boston College, USA, two ITI professors were invited to speak at the conference - Father Joseph Bolin from the USA and Father Yuriy Kolasa (STL '07) from Ukraine. Father Kolasa, ITI Prefect of Formation for Seminarians, was asked to present the subject from the view of the Eastern Catholic Churches.

Giving the reasons for the necessity of such a seminar, Father Jamison writes in the introductory description:

Many who work in the field of vocations find that there is currently no shared language of vocation among Catholics in the developed, post-modern world of Europe and North America. This is a major hindrance in carrying out the Church's ministry of helping people to discern their vocation.

Paths of Love, the book that started it all, speaks about the discernment of vocation in St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Ignatius and Pope John Paul II and how vocation should be pursued in the Church. Father Jamison was struck by Bolin's elucidation of different schools of thought on vocation discernment and sees that "going back to the sources" could help confront the crisis in vocations. ✂

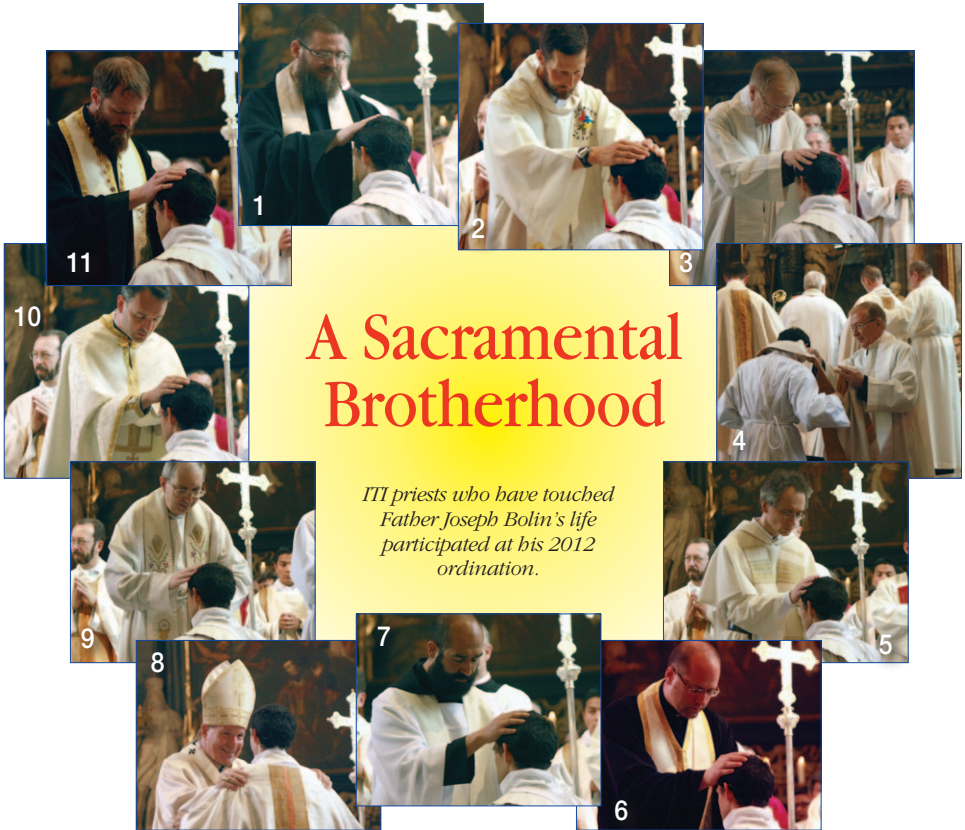


Rev. Joseph Bolin's (STL '07) book inspired a change of thought in vocation discernment.

Paths of Love, the book that started it all, speaks about the discernment of vocation in St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Ignatius and Pope John Paul II and how vocation should be pursued in the Church.

The One Priesthood of Christ

The Ordination of Father Joseph Bolin (STL '07)



1. Fr. Thomas Bolin, O.S.B. (ITI STL '00) brother of Fr. Joseph, monk in Norcia, Italy
2. Fr. Johannes Cornides (ITI STD exp.'14)
3. Msgr. Dr. Larry Hogan, ITI Rector
4. Msgr. Hogan helps in vesting Fr. Bolin
5. Prof. Dr. Rupert Mayer, O.P., ITI Asc. Prof. of Fundamental Theology
6. Fr. Yuriy Kolasa (ITI STL '07), Vicar General of the Byzantine Rite faithful in Austria, Prefect of the ITI Formation Program
7. Fr. Basil Nixen, O.S.B. (ITI STM '10) monk in Norcia, Italy
8. Cardinal Schönborn, ITI Grand Chancellor, greets his newly ordained priest
9. Prof. Dr. Josef Spindelböck, ITI Visiting Prof. of Moral Theology
10. Fr. Juraj Terek (ITI STM '99) ITI Byzantine Rite Chaplain, Dir. of Student Life
11. Fr. Joseph Veresh, (ITI DTS '04) ITI Asc. Prof. of Patrology and Eastern Christian Theology, Dir. of Eastern Christian Studies Centre

Joseph Bolin is originally from the state of Iowa, in the United States, but God has called him to serve as a priest in Austria. During his theological studies at the ITI, Joseph was led to the Archdiocese of Vienna and entered the seminary there after his Licentiate graduation. On June 15, 2012, on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, friends, family and members of the Archdiocese witnessed his ordination at St. Stephan's Cathedral in Vienna.

During the rite of ordination, there is a part where all the priests present come forward to lay their hands on the ordinand—a sign that they are bound together in a sacramental brotherhood of the one priesthood of Christ. During this imposition of the hands one was able to see all the priests at the ITI that had touched Joseph's life and helped him to say “yes” to this call.

Father Bolin has been assigned to a parish near Vienna and will teach at the ITI as Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology. Our prayers are with you, Father Bolin, as you carry out your priestly ministry! ✂

Project *Only You*

The *Only You* team successfully held their first weekend retreat for young people in in October 2010, in Budapest, Hungary. The *Only You* project was conceived by Gabriele Kuby, a German author and popular speaker, in Rome in 2007. Working with ITI professors Dr. Gintautas Vaitoska, Lithuania, and Fr. Yuriy Kolasa (STL '07), Ukraine, and graduates Toma Bruzaite (MMF '09), Lithuania, and Robert McNamara (MMF '09), Ireland, in early 2009, the project grew with the wisdom and expertise of the Catholic teaching and experience embodied at the ITI. The *Only You* weekends for young people take the format of an educational retreat where the young person is introduced to both the love of God and the truth and meaning of human sexuality. They are then invited to practice the virtue of chastity as a positive and life-giving choice. The team worked closely with Fr. Peter Roska, a Hungarian priest, and his team of young adults to host the first retreat of the newly designed program. The retreat was held in a Polish convent in the suburbs of Budapest, dedicated to Pope John Paul II. Over forty young people from throughout Hungary, and even as far as Romania, came to partake of this challenging but beautiful Gospel message of pure love, and left joyfully witnessing to a greater faith and virtue. ✂



The ONLY YOU team listening to the translator. From right to left: Fr. Kolasa (STL '07), Gabriele Kuby, translator, Robert McNamara (MMF '09), Toma Bruzaite (MMF '09).

Bringing Saint Thomas Around the Globe

ITI graduates tackle the project of publishing the works of the Angelic Doctor in English/Latin parallel editions.

The Popes say, “*Ite ad Thomam*,” “Go to Thomas,” but how does one do so in today’s non-Latin-speaking world? Several members of the International Theological Institute (ITI)

family have collaborated to address this problem and make the works of

High-quality versions of the works of St. Thomas Aquinas were expensive and hard to find... Certain works had never been translated... The Aquinas Institute ... began the task of translating the missing pieces, revising older translations, and editing the texts for publication.

St. Thomas Aquinas easily accessible to scholars today. ITI graduates Dr. Jeremy Holmes (ITI STM '01) and Dr. John Mortensen (ITI STL '01), and former ITI professor, Dr. Peter Kwasniewski, all professors at Wyoming Catholic College, looked around and saw that high-quality versions of the works of St. Thomas Aquinas were expensive and hard to find. Moreover, certain works had never been translated into English.

This problem was brought to the attention of Kwasniewski, Holmes, and Mortensen when they founded the Aquinas Institute in 2008 to offer summer courses to graduate students and religious. Over the course of eight weeks, the three colleagues, along with several guest professors, led students in a careful study of St. Thomas’s commentaries on the letters of St. Paul. For this summer course, the Aquinas Institute developed editions of these commentaries using the unfinished translations of Fr. Larcher, O.P., which had been transcribed and revised by Ave Maria University students and faculty. Based on this experience, the Aquinas Institute launched its project in the summer of 2012 to publish the *Opera Omnia* of St. Thom-



Juliana Bridge (STM exp. '14), helped with the translating work for the new edition of the works of St. Thomas Aquinas.

as in hardcover Latin-English editions.

The Aquinas Institute's announcement of the publishing project on June 13, 2012 attracted attention from around the globe. Although there was no formal publicity campaign at that time, preorders of the Pauline commentaries and the entire *Opera Omnia* poured in, not only from priests and academics, but from high school teachers, small business owners, and even a high school student.

Dr. Mortensen had written an online collaboration tool to facilitate international translating and editing of the texts of St. Thomas Aquinas. In cooperation with the online edition of the Latin texts of *Corpus Thomisticum*, the Aquinas Institute put together the entire collection of the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas and began the task of translating the missing pieces, revising older translations, and editing the texts for publication. The first five volumes of the commentaries of St. Thomas on the letters of St. Paul came out on the feast of Our Lady's name day, September 12, 2012. The next eight volumes, the *Summa Theologiae*, were published on December 12, 2012. The *Commentary on the Gospel of John* was published on March 25, 2013, and the *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* on August 15th, 2013. After this, the Aquinas Institute will be systematically publishing the works of St. Thomas Aquinas until the whole 58 volume set is complete.

The Aquinas Institute has been seeking independent funding for a project to translate St. Thomas's *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, which has never before been translated into English. This translation project will take as its point of departure the two largest portions of the *Sentences Commentary* to appear in English to date; namely, Dr. Beth Mortensen's (ITI STL '01) translation of the sixteen distinctions that form St. Thomas's treatise on marriage, and Dr. Peter Kwasniewski's translation of certain articles on charity, which appeared in his book, *On Love and Charity: Readings from the Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* (CUA Press, 2008). These texts were translated in conjunction with Fr. Thomas Bolin (ITI STL '00) and Fr. Joseph Bolin (ITI STL '07).

The worldwide importance of these Latin-English editions has already been evident in the interest they have generated in Hong Kong, Poland, and other non-Western cultures where English is increasingly more accessible than Latin, even in academic circles. For more information on this project go to www.theaquinasinstitute.org ✂



Fighting the Gender Blur in Lithuania

ITI graduates successfully resist the implementation of a so-called “gender equality” program in Lithuanian kindergartens. Do you want your kids reading, *The Day when Frederik was Frida*?

ITI graduates, Mindaugas and Emilija Radusis (both MMF ‘10) helped to expose the dangers of the program.

Recently in 2012, the Lithuanian National Association of Parents and Families was the main group

which resisted the gender mainstreaming agenda imposed on Lithuania by the Women’s Information Centre and supported by the Council of Ministers of the Nordic Countries. ITI Professor Dr. Gintautas Vaitoska, who is a psychiatrist, and ITI graduate Vita Kuliaviene (MMF ‘08) were the experts of the Parents and Families Association in the working group which reviewed the proposed “gender equality” program for Lith-

The proposed program tries to introduce the notion of gender as a ‘fluid’ reality subject to one’s personal choice.

uanian kindergartens. The proposed program tries to introduce the notion of gender as a ‘fluid’ reality subject to one’s personal choice, and attempts to “resocialise boys in the direction of femininity”. The very titles of the children’s books used in the program – *The Day when Frederik was Frida* and *The Day when Rike was Rasmus* – are revealing.

Representing the National Association of Parents and Families, Vita Kuliaviene and Dr. Vaitoska, with the help of other ITI graduates – among them Mindaugas and

Emilija Radusis (both MMF ‘10), and Marius Minkevicius (MMF ‘12), exposed the dangers of the program with many publications and interviews in the central Lithuanian press. They argued that, among other things, the program puts some children at risk of developing a Gender Identity Disorder. This disorder is on the list of the In-

ternational Classification of Diseases as a psychological disturbance.

The group emphasized the need to help Lithuanian children to strengthen their unique masculine or feminine identity rather than to blur it. On the fifth of November 2012, the working group which consisted of members of various Lithuanian Ministries and NVO's, led by the Association of Parents and Families experts, successfully resisted the immediate implementation of the program in Lithuanian kindergartens. The promoters of the program decided to stop the program and will open a public discussion (as before this, the program's contents were not revealed to the public). The battle is not yet over, but the Lithuanian Association of Parents and Families is thankful to the ITI for the deep formation of its



students – as well as for the moral support and prayer for the promotion of the authentic dignity of men and women in this Baltic country. ✂

Vita Kuliaviene (MMF '08), was one of the experts who reviewed and resisted the proposed program for Lithuanian kindergartens.





Theology on One's Knees

The Aquinas Institute of Ireland
inaugural summer school
(Knockadoon, Ireland, 25 August
to 2 September 2012)

What could possibly inspire a professional journalist, a doctoral student in computer science, a seminarian, an environmentalist, a lawyer, and a housewife to spend ten days together in a small fishing village on the southern coast of Ireland?

The answer is: a thirteenth century monk and scholar by the name of St. Thomas Aquinas. Along with more than thirty other students – that included monks, nuns, other seminar-



[The Institute] was founded in order to promote the study of St. Thomas in Ireland among those who, until now, have had little opportunity.

of life – this diverse group of adults spent ten days in August 2012 meticulously studying the first thirteen questions of the *Summa Theologiae*



at the inaugural summer school of the Aquinas Institute of Ireland.

Top: The four founders of the Aquinas Institute of Ireland; bottom: Participants discussed the first thirteen questions of the *Summa Theologiae*.

The Institute was formed in 2012 by a professor of the International Theological Institute - ITI (William Newton, MMF '05) and two graduates of the ITI (Robert McNamara, MMF '09 and Patricia Mannering, STL '12) along with a Dominican brother from Ireland (Conor McDonough). It was founded in order to promote the study of St. Thomas in Ireland among those who, until now, have had little opportunity to engage with the profound and ever fruitful thought of the Universal Doctor of the Church.

In conformity with the pedagogical ethos of the Institute, the format of the school was designed to put the participants in *direct* contact with

the philosophy and theology of St. Thomas. It required every student to read each of the first thirteen questions of the *Summa* and then enter into a detailed discussion of the texts in small seminar groups guided by experienced professors from Queens University, Belfast, the International Theological Institute, Austria, and the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, as well as from within the Irish Dominican Order.

Despite the rigorous academic character of the week, the overriding goal was to facilitate a deepening of faith. To this end, significant amounts of time were given over to communal prayer (Matins, Vespers, and Compline) as well as to daily Mass and to extended periods of Eucharistic adoration. In a word, the idea was to do “theology on our knees.”

Undoubtedly, the setting for the school added to the overwhelmingly positive experience of the participants. Knockadoon camp – a long established retreat centre owned by the Dominicans – is located at the end of a long country road opening out onto the expansive and breathtakingly beautiful Youghal Bay. Moreover, and not to be taken for granted in that part of the world, the sun shone!

The choice of studying the first thirteen questions of the *Summa* was a considered one: it fulfilled two important goals. Firstly, in these questions, St. Thomas marshals many of his most important ideas and principles. This gave participants – both those experienced in the philosophy of St. Thomas and those coming to it for the first time – the possibility of discussing and assimilating the key features to the great Master’s thought. Secondly, in these questions, the Angelic Doctor teaches us what can be known about the existence of God and His attributes by the unaided power of human reason. This makes these initial questions of the *Summa* required reading for anyone interested in engaging an increasingly secular and even militantly atheistic culture; a problem from which modern Ireland is no longer immune.

This then points to the continued importance of directly studying and grappling with the thought of St. Thomas. It sharpens the mind and quickens the heart in such a way that those who undertake this (sometimes) difficult venture with enthusiasm are, with the help of St. Thomas, drawn closer to The Truth and thereby more able to pass Him onto to the people of our age.

As Pope John XXII said of the Genius from Aquino: “a man can derive more profit in a year from [reading] his books than from pondering all his life the teaching of others.” We only had ten days, but it was a good a start.

For more information on the next Aquinas Institute of Ireland summer school, see www.aquinasinstitute.ie ✂

Study the Way St. Thomas Did

ITI Students Found a Summer Program: St. Albert the Great Center for Scholastic Studies *by John P. Joy (STL '12)*

John Joy and Louis Bolin, (both STL '12) ITI theology licentiate students, love the study of theology so much that they used their free time after the academic year and, with other ITI alumni, founded the Saint Albert the Great Center for Scholastic Studies. Their first Summer Program took place in 2011 in Norcia, Italy, at the monastery of St. Benedict and was entitled "Christ: Source and Summit of All Things." Participants were invited to a two-week course of studies in sacramental theology presented in the form of the great Catholic uni-

versities of the high Middle Ages. Unique to the programs of the Albertus Magnus CSS is the combination of scholastic form and content, namely the study of St. Thomas Aquinas *in the way that St. Thomas himself would have studied.*

Hence their dedication of the Center

to his own teacher, St. Albert the Great. Their programs thus take as their central focus the three tasks of the Medieval masters of theology (*praedicatio, lectio, disputatio*) together with the course of studies undertaken by medieval students of theology, which involved comment-



Top: Fr. Cassian Folsom, OSB., lecturing on the Holy Eucharist. Middle: John Joy (STL '12) looking over a text of Chrysostom. Bottom: The scholastic disputation.

ing on the theological textbook of the day, e.g. the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard.

Praedicatio – the participants arrived in Norcia on Trinity Sunday and attended a late Mass offered by ITI graduate, Fr. Thomas Bolin. His preaching on the doctrine of the Trinity was superb, although it is a difficult topic to take in even when one hasn't been traveling all night and day! Holy Mass was available every day both at the Sisters' convent (*Novus Ordo*) and at the Brothers' monastery (*Usus Antiquior*).

Lectio – Fr. Cassian Folsom, the prior of the monastery, delivered the inaugural seminar / lecture on the Holy Eucharist, drawing his insights from Papa Ratzinger's book *Jesus of Nazareth*. Fr. Thomas followed with an excellent series of lectures on the Eucharist in relation to the other sacraments which we were studying: principally baptism and matrimony, and then holy orders as well. These were highly enjoyable thanks to Fr. Thomas's excellent insights and inimitable good humour.

Disputatio – intended as the culmination of the program, the scholastic disputation did not disappoint! Participants argued the pros and cons of various questions pertaining to baptism and matrimony that had arisen in the course of daily readings and discussions – had a chance to argue against each other's positions and objections – and then listened to Fr. Thomas give the *respondeo* ('I answer that') of the Master. He did a tremendous job, taking notes furiously and then, after giving his own answer, responding individually to each objection pro and con.

Commentaria – the academic portion of the program was rounded out by daily seminars on theological texts of the great masters, principally St. Thomas's *Summa Theologiae*, which has long since replaced Peter Lombard's *Sentences* as the textbook for 'beginners' in theology. Commentary on the texts was verbal rather than written, of course, and thus carried out in a seminar style classroom setting. Additional readings were taken not from the scholastics themselves, but from those whom the scholastics themselves would have read, namely the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, as well as the documents of the magisterium.

The location in Norcia, Italy, was in itself one of the highlights of the Summer Program. It gave everyone the chance to spend a few days in Rome, including being there for the Feast of Corpus Christi, as well as to make a couple of day-trips to nearby Assisi and Cascia. Find news of their next summer course at www.albertusmagnuscscs.org ✂

Some People Call Us

“the Specialists”

Interview with ITI Graduates,
Father Calin (STL '11) and Cristina
(STL '09) Sechelea; Heading the
Education Department in the new
Romanian Education Center “Love
and Truth”



Father Calin (STL '11) and Cristina (STL '09) Sechelea and their four children; a living catechesis to the people they meet.

Recent ITI graduates Cristina and Calin Sechelea were born and raised in Romania - and intended to stay there. They did not expect that their path in life would lead

them to a small school in Austria, or how that would change their lives. The couple were married in 1998, and Calin had an interesting career working first as a systems engineer and then as a travel agent and tour guide. In fact, they had their honeymoon as part of a tourist group that Calin was in charge of. Cristina worked in several schools as a catechist and was the diocesan inspector for religious education in schools. They both felt a call to serve the Church and their bishop recommended the ITI to them. While studying at the ITI, they juggled classes, work and a growing family, but were successful at everything. Cristina received her Licentiate in Sacred Theology (STL) at the ITI in 2009 and Calin received his Master in Sacred Theology (STM) and then his STL in 2011. They have four children, which is rare in Romania. After graduating, they returned home and helped to open the Education and Charity Center in Cluj Napoca, Romania, called “Love and Truth.” At the Center, Calin is the Education Department Coordinator, and Cristina is a catechist and marriage counselor. Calin Sechelea was ordained to the priesthood on October 31, 2010. In October 2012, Father Calin was appointed as Counselor to his bishop in matters regarding religious education in the schools and parishes of the diocese. They took time out of their busy days to tell us about the journey that led them to their present mission.

How were you introduced to the ITI and what made you decide to study here?

We were introduced to the ITI by our bishop, His Excellency Florentin Crihalmeanu, Bishop of Cluj-Gherla in Romania. He was very excited after he visited the ITI and he told us, "You must go there"! We remember being surprised at the time at his enthusiasm, since he is not a person that gets excited too easily. We each felt the need to go. Calin felt the call to get involved in serving the Church and wanted to discern his vocation and to study theology. Cristina, on the other hand, was already involved in catechesis and wanted to deepen her formation. When we told our bishop about Calin's call, he said that if there is a place where a married person can discern his religious vocation, the ITI is the one (keep in mind that we are Byzantine Catholics which have the tradition of married clergy). So we applied to the ITI. It took, however, two years until it was possible for us to come, because the school did not have enough accommodations.

How was your life changed by studying at the ITI?

Our life has changed in many ways.

First of all, we grew in our faith. The rich liturgical life which the ITI provided with the daily Divine Liturgy (the Byzantine Rite Mass), adoration, the liturgy of the hours, retreats, our involvement with Teams of our Lady on campus, Calin's participation in the Priestly Formation Program, the meetings with other seminarians and their wives, and the good examples of the priests and the families at the ITI, all of these strengthened us in our faith.

We also grew in our academic formation. And I don't mean just in theological or other information received, but in how to live it as well - true formation. We also improved in our ability to write papers, in our ability to talk in front of an audience, we learned how to plan and organize events and how to do networking.

Our family life has changed for the better. We received real answers to the education challenges we faced and we also received support and good examples from other families.

Because the ITI is international, we also learned from people who were coming from different cultures how to be part of a community and how to build a community. We learned to open our door and our heart to others. They have enriched us and brought us friendships which have continued after our studies were ended.

What are you doing now?

In the years we spent studying at the ITI, we prayed and prepared to

Some People Call Us “the Specialists” continued

work for Our Lord. Our idea when we left the ITI and returned to Romania was to open a family center, in order to work with and help families. We felt that there is a great need to encourage them to live a holy life.

Because the ITI is international, we also learned from people who were coming from different cultures how to be part of a community and how to build a community. We learned to open our door and our hearts to others.

What God had prepared for us was somewhat different, but it gave our ideas a wider perspective. Our friend, Leonard Farauanu (STL '04), also an ITI graduate, prepared the field for us at the Holy Family Foundation in our town. The foundation started in a doctor's apartment as a free clinic offering medical help to those in need. At one time the number of doctors offering free medical help grew to 100. Now there are about thirty still doing volunteer work in the clinic.

Soon after our return to Romania, this foundation opened a new Center called “Love and Truth”. This Center, in the first place, wants to promote Christian values and to help people to integrate their Christian education and values with an openness to charity. The Center has three departments dealing with different areas: educational, religious and charitable. We (Cristina and Calin) are in charge of the educational department, as well as cooperating with the other departments and participating in their programs.

What post-Communist mentalities do you see and how are you answering them?

Recovering from a long period of Communism, Romania is receiving both good and bad things from the West. Although many areas have improved, we can say that often people are missing the fire of their faith. There are still the traces of a communist mentality. For example, parents still expect the school to educate their children completely and they abdicate from their role as first educators of their children.

Many people have replaced the kind of materialism preached by the communists with market materialism, consumerism and hedonism. Parents spend long hours at work to provide every fashionable thing for their children. People therefore have fewer children because they cannot afford to provide all these things for them. They want to have control over their whole life and do not give God any space. We sometimes feel that just walking through town with our four children is a catechesis for the people we meet.

There is still a great interest in the faith in Romania, but too often people's faith is not integrated in their life and they remain “Sunday Christians.” This is felt in many areas, but especially in family life. Romania is quickly

following the family crisis of the West. The divorce rate in Romania is already over 25% and growing. Natural family planning methods are unknown, even to many Catholics; not to mention that the situation is even worse in the Orthodox majority, where natural family planning is completely disregarded and divorce is tolerated.

We have organized, with the help of a group of specialists, a marriage preparation course which includes anthropology, sacramentality, psychology, morals, spirituality, canon and civil law, practical skills and natural family planning. We have already finished the first series and we have started a second one. Interestingly enough, in each series we had a couple who were already married interested in taking the course and we have had, besides Greek and Roman Catholics, also Orthodox and Protestants attending. We also offer, upon request, marriage counseling and parenting assistance.

As spiritual food, we organized a weekly Bible study group and we started a series of monthly seminars on different religious subjects. Cristina also opened an Atrium of the Good Shepherd Catechesis for religious education for pre-school children (3-6 years) and she has over 20 children attending.

We also offer some other activities which are not strictly religious, but which promote Christian culture. For example, we started a chess club to encourage fathers to spend time with their children. We also have a Cineforum where we watch movies with a message and then have a discussion afterwards.



ITI graduates Fr. Calin Sechelea (STL '11) and Leonard Farauanu (STL '04) assist Bishop Florentin Crihalmeanu (center) at the blessing of the new Center.

How have your studies and life at the ITI helped you with your current work?

We have to say that we found out that everything we studied and experienced in the ITI has helped us in one way or another. Of course, first of all, our studies help us every day in the programs we are developing for the Center (by the way, some people call us “the specialists”).

But our whole experience with the ITI has proved very inspiring in our work and life. For example, our experience with Teams of Our Lady helped us to answer the need and desire of young families to deepen their faith, to talk about their problems, their life experience and to encourage one another. Cristina was able to use her experience from the ITI with the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and she opened an Atrium, which is also an occasion for her to meet other mothers and to encourage them.

Some People Call Us “the Specialists” continued



Fr. Calin Sechelea (STL '11), gives an address at the opening of the new Center of Education and Charity, called “Love and Truth” in Cluj Napoca, Romania. Fr. Calin is head of the Center’s Education Department.

Our meetings with priests, seminarians and their wives in the ITI helped us in developing the part of our course on the spirituality of the family and especially the part on the spirituality of the married priest, which we offer for the seminarians preparing for marriage.

And, probably the most important, in the ITI we learned to take our spiritual life seriously. We learned that our fulfillment and our value is not to be found in what we do, but in who we are – children of God – and in what is our end – God Himself. We learned that everything we do has to be rooted in prayer, that we can only be good apostles if we stay with Him, for in the end, it is He who changes the hearts of the people, not us.

At the end of the day it’s important for us to give testimony of the light we are carrying and the best way to do it is by having a positive attitude and a smile for the people you meet.

What is your vision for your work and for how it will help your country?

Our work is of course, just at the beginning. But we hope to be able to make this Center an oasis of Christianity, a place where Christianity and Christians feel at home (a little ITI community, in a way). On the other hand, the center should not simply become another community – we are not a parish. The activities of the center are, on the contrary, thought to be a service provided to the parishes in our town, and we hope to be able to develop some of our programs in cooperation with different parishes.

In the future we hope to extend our family counseling program and to take the marriage preparation course to the next level, organizing formation courses for the teachers who will be giving the formation in the parishes, and to develop a chastity program for teenagers and a parental counseling program.

We also hope to start a readers club for children and to put together a library for the center (we already have approx. 800 books in our catalogue).

We were greatly encouraged by the Pope’s message to our bishops at their *ad limina* visit in Rome. The Pope specifically asked them to create structures to help families. Through our work at the center and our collaboration with the department for family and life in our diocese, we are doing just that. It is the mission that God has given us. ✂



A Unique Mandate

After graduating from the ITI, Rev. Alan Boisclair (STL '07) receives a unique mandate to implement Blessed John Paul II's Theology of the Body catechesis.

How were you introduced to the ITI and what made you decide to study here?

Originally, I was seeking advanced training in three areas: Theology of the Body, the Gospel of John and the New Evangelization. Immediately I noticed that it was very difficult to get all these choices in a single location. In checking around, it was Scott Hahn who recommended the ITI to me. I was fortunate that I was not only able to take a tutorial and the Theology of the Body (TOB) course from Dr. Michael Waldstein, but his Gospel of John course as well. This was life changing. I was fortunate to have a course on the New Evangelization, from Prof. Rüschi. But two other areas of study entirely opened up for me at the ITI: I took two courses from Prof. Nicholas Healy on Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) which were amazing. Finally, the study of Romano Guardini, through Prof. Bernhard Dolna, inspired me so much that it became the focus for both my thesis and dissertation for my Sacred Theology Licentiate (STL) degree.

I found that all of the courses at the ITI were so well balanced and integrated, that there was a resonance between one course and another that was amazing.

How was your life changed by studying at the ITI?

After completing my studies at the ITI, I was out of rotation for being a pastor, so I worked in a remote parish as an assistant for one and half years giving courses on Theology of the Body, Romano Guardini and Ratzinger. From June 2008 to July 2010, I was pastor of a parish located in the Metro Vancouver area, so I began to give eleven week or twenty-two hour Theology of the Body courses twice yearly throughout the Archdiocese of Vancouver.

The response was so positive and overwhelming from the four full courses that I taught, that Archbishop Michael Miller, CSB, received



My mandate is universal; I am to integrate the Theology of the Body into all areas of the Archdiocese... I understand that this broad mandate is unique in all of North America.



Icon of the Wedding Feast at Cana done by an ITI student.

hundreds of letters stating that I should be doing this full time. In July 2010, he appointed me full time Coordinator for the Theology of the Body Office for the Archdiocese of Vancouver, BC, Canada.

My mandate is universal; I am to integrate the Theology of the Body into all areas of the Archdiocese including: priests and religious, Catholic schools (elementary and high), marriage prep-

aration, Natural Family Planning, catechists and religious education teachers, Catholic Faith formation groups, various youth groups, young adult groups, and men's and women's groups. I understand that this broad mandate is unique in all of North America.

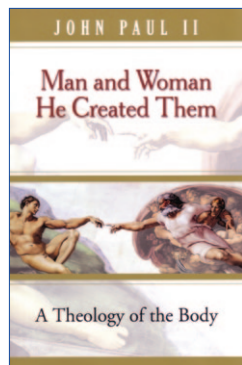
So far, I have taught the full Theology of the Body course eight times in various parts of the Archdiocese, with the universal feeling from the participants of a profound sense of sacred awe and joy, combined with a slight burn of disappointment upon the realization that, if they had only learned this teaching years earlier, they would have avoided numerous painful mistakes in their lives.

I have seen the Theology of the Body change people's entire lives. I have witnessed it heal broken people of their wounded self image and similarly heal bruised marriages. Recently, a young woman was so inspired that she joined Mother Teresa's Sisters of Charity as a novice. At my last class, a couple in their 80's came to say: "This was awesome! It made our faith come alive and explained so many things that we had never understood before!"

While I find that many priests and bishops still as yet do not understand how thoroughly life changing this catechesis of Pope John Paul "The Great" is, the response from the laity has been consistently overwhelming. I feel the swelling voice of many witnesses convincing their clergy of its importance, not only for married

or single people, but for clergy and religious as well.

So far, I have only been able to give my fellow priests a twenty minute talk at their Deanery meetings, but have not as yet had the opportunity to give them an in-depth study day or workshop. In the meantime, I have gathered donors for a project: to give to each priest,



currently on assignment for the Archdiocese of Vancouver, a four CD set, "Introduction to the Theology of the Body", for them to use in their cars, so that they can absorb this material in a convenient way despite their busy schedules.

What are you doing now?

I am currently offering six Theology of the Body courses throughout the Archdiocese in fall, winter and early spring.

I am giving various workshops to Catholic school teachers, so that they in turn can have an "adequate understanding" of being "created in the image and likeness of God" to inspire their students.

I am working on a modular, certifiable, Theology of the Body program for all teachers and youth coordinators for the Archdiocese of Vancouver.

The resounding "yes" from hundreds of people, young and old, has testified to the life changing importance of this teaching of Pope John Paul the Great.

I have seen the Theology of the Body change people's entire lives. I have witnessed it heal broken people of their wounded self image and similarly heal bruised marriages.

How have your studies and life at the ITI helped you with your current work?

It is only through the ITI, through my Licentiate specializing in Marriage and the Family, that I am able to do the work that I am doing. I am deeply grateful to the professors and community at the ITI for their guidance and inspiration.

What is your vision for your work? How will it help your diocese?

I feel a groundswell of eager and inspired people who, after taking the course and catching the fire, can't help but spread this Good News with burning love.

In addition to all the courses and programs already mentioned, my hope is to be able to reach my fellow priests with study days, workshops and hopefully a full study week, to saturate them with this profound insight into our humanity and destiny. It is only when they finally get the full vision of "man in the image of God" that they will really understand and share the joy that Pope John Paul the Great meant for all of us.

Ultimately, I would hope to have an International Theology of the Body Congress here in Vancouver, BC, Canada.

All this, thanks to the education that I received from the ITI. ✂



ITI Graduate Dr. John Mortensen Receives Pontifical Award

After the Pontifical Academies' award ceremony, Dr. John Mortensen (STL '01) and family receive a blessing from His Holiness.

The year 2010 started off well for ITI graduate Dr. John R. Mortensen, who received the Pontifical Academies' award for his doctoral thesis entitled, “*Un-*

derstanding St. Thomas on Analogy.” Mortensen is the second North American to win the prize since its institution by John Paul II in 1996, and the first recipient during Benedict XVI's pontificate. According to the Vatican website, the prize of €20,000 “is awarded periodically to a person—a young scholar or artist—or to an institution, whose research, work, or activity contributes significantly to the development of religious studies, Christian humanism, and its artistic expressions.” It was last awarded in 2004, during the pontificate of John Paul II.

The prize was presented in Rome by Vatican Secretary of State, Tarcisio Cardinal Bertone, S.D.B. on Wednesday, January 27th, 2010. The next day, Pope Benedict XVI received the Pontifical Theological Academies in an audience, and John, his wife, Beth, and their four young children were presented to His Holiness.

Dr. Mortensen wrote the thesis to help clear up a long-standing debate about the meaning of the word “analogy” in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas. Mortensen explained that a correct understanding of analogy is important, because it is a foundation for understanding philosophical and theological concepts. If analogy is not understood correctly, many errors follow.

Mortensen received his bachelors at Thomas Aquinas College in the US. He then went on to study theology at the ITI for four years in Austria, where he met Beth. After the couple received their Master and Licentiate degrees in Sacred Theology at the ITI, the Mortensens then attended the Pontifical Academy of Santa Croce in Rome, where John received his doctorate. John and Beth returned to Austria and the ITI where John taught theology and philosophy for five years. In 2007, the Mortensens moved back to the US where John became a founding faculty member of Wyoming Catholic College. He currently teaches there as Associate Professor of

Theology and Philosophy and is co-founder of the Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine.

On their return, John's children were excitedly talking about the experience of seeing their father receive an award and being able to greet the Holy

Father. "Our Daddy won an award!", they said to a friend. "Oh? And what was it?" asked the friend. "A really fancy piece of paper," the children jubilantly replied. ✂



ITI in the Church and in the World The Word of God Bears Fruit in Austria



Sisters from the Monastery of Bethlehem pray at the ceremony where they receive their habit.

ITI graduate, Katherina Fischer (STM '09), of Austria received the habit of the monastic family of Bethlehem in early November, 2010. The sisters are located in Austria near Salzburg and ITI students often go there for silent retreats. Kathi wrote, "I discover more and more what an immense gift it was to study, live and pray at the ITI! It is a gift which will probably take me all my life to unwrap. In so many different ways, God's goodness, truth and beauty was revealed to me and the Word of God was spoken to me by you through the classes, liturgies, discussions, and also especially through the community life...through the witness of your lives, especially also through the witness of your families, during my time at the ITI! Wasn't it also partly this desire that the Word of God planted in my heart during my time at the ITI...that guided me to the place where I am now, and that lets me so joyfully receive the habit? In this light, the feast of my reception of the habit becomes, in a certain sense, a sign of how much I treasure (and strive to let it bear fruit) what I received at the ITI...and isn't ...this step of receiving the habit one of the best and most authentic THANK YOUs I can give? ✂

ITI Alumni Carry on the Legacy

ITI Graduates Organize the Second Annual International Theology of the Body Symposium

by Monica Rapeanu (STL '03)

Who can assess the abiding legacy of John Paul II? Who can measure the depth and richness of his thought which is present in the various forms that his writing takes? One thing that can be said with certainty is that all of his teachings and writings offer us an integral vision of the human person and of human relations. And what we call The Theology of the Body is no exception.

Who would have thought that the catechetical lessons on God's plan for human life and love, given at the beginning of his pontificate, were going to change the way many people today look at their own bodies, at sexuality and at their particular vocation? Moreover, these lessons contained in the Theology of the Body have become a constant theme for reflection and the source of many talks, retreats, conferences, articles and books. Lately, they have also been the theme under which two important international events have taken place.

The First International Symposium on John Paul II's Theology of the Body was held in Gaming, Austria, in May 2007, and it was hosted by the Franciscan University of Steubenville (Austrian Program).

After the great success of this first symposium, three of the participants, who were also at the ITI, decided to come together to work on organizing a second International Theology of the Body Symposium to facilitate further understanding and promotion of this great teaching. After prayer and discussion, Ireland was chosen as the venue. The three organizers, Jana Prudka (Czech Republic, ITI 2009), Robert McNamara (Ireland, ITI 2009) and Monica Rapeanu (Romania, ITI 2003), were supported in their endeavour by Dr. Michael Waldstein, to whom they owe in great part their knowledge, understanding of, and love for, the Theology of the Body. The organizing team was joined by two others from Ireland, Damian Polly and Niall Leahy, and by an Australian, Anne-Maree Quinn.

Their work was successful and the Second International Symposium was held in June 2009 on the weekend of the Feast of Corpus Christi, June 11-14, in anticipation of the thirtieth anniversary of Pope John Paul

Without a doubt, the Second International Theology of the Body Symposium clearly showed that the ITI is a school with a successful mission; it is not only a place where solid Catholic theological formation is offered, but also a place where New Evangelization projects are born.



of John Paul II

II's visit to Ireland, as well as the thirtieth anniversary of the first Papal Audience on this topic. The venue was St. Patrick's College Maynooth, one of the places visited by John Paul II in 1979. The symposium was hosted by Pure in Heart, an Irish youth community dedicated to promoting chastity and to living the true beauty of sexuality.

At Dr. Waldstein's suggestion, the topics chosen for the talks followed the structure of the Theology of the Body itself. The list of Speakers included Dr. Michael Waldstein, Kathy Sinnott (Ireland), Rev. Donald Calloway M.I.C. (USA), Sr. Mary Timothy Prokes, F.S.E (USA), artist Dony Mac Manus (Ireland), Rev. Alan O'Sullivan O.P. (Ireland), Dr. Peter J. Colosi (USA), Dr. Mary Shivanandan (USA), Dr. Phil Boyle (Ireland), and two ITI graduates, Dr. Mary Healy (USA, ITI 1998) and Dr. William Newton (England, graduate ITI 2005, current ITI professor). Unfortunately, Dr. Waldstein and Fr. Calloway were unable to attend, but this Symposium, too, by God's grace, was another great success with 270 participants present from 21 different countries, a deeply warm and friendly atmosphere, engaging speakers and inspiring talks. The program included, of course, daily Mass, perpetual adoration, and last but not least, social events that



Top Row: Audience at the Symposium. *Second Row:* Rob McNamara and Ryan Chalissery, ITI alumni who helped to organize and film the event. *Third Row:* The Symposium organizing team. ITI graduates: Rob McNamara (back, left), Jana Prudka (front, left), and Monica Rapeanu (front, right), came up with the idea to organize the Symposium. *Fourth Row:* William Newton, ITI graduate and current professor, was a speaker at the Symposium.

The Legacy of John Paul II continued

were appreciated and enjoyed by all. A highlight was a theatrical performance of Karol Wojtyła's "The Jeweller's Shop."

This event was at the same time an opportunity for a deepening of personal faith and self-understanding meant to inspire greater participation in the New Evangelization. Moreover, this international encounter was designed to help foster and develop prosperous networks to assist participants with their own evangelization initiatives.

A unique characteristic of this symposium was the fact that it brought together several ITI alumni. Also present were Vidya Chalissery (India, ITI 2009), Toma Bruzaite (Lithuania, ITI 2009) and three current students who contributed their wonderful gifts to the success of the symposium. STM student, Ryan Chalissery (India), organized and coordinated the audio and video recording of the entire event, while Deirdre Wood (USA) and Max Becher (USA) delighted the audience with their musical talents.

Without a doubt, the Second International Theology of the Body Symposium clearly showed that the ITI is a school with a successful mission; it is not only a place where solid Catholic theological formation is offered, but also a place where New Evangelization projects are born.

At the beginning of her talk, Dr. Mary Healy remarked: "the Theology of the Body, in presenting the Church's Good News about the body, man and woman and how they were created in the image of God, is also a spiritual battle." But she also emphasized, "the good thing about the spiritual battle in the Kingdom of God is that the safest place to be is right on the frontlines."

The ITI alumni who took part in this Second International Symposium hope to remain on the frontlines while helping spread and proclaim the message of the Theology of the Body to a world that hungers for true love and beauty. ✂



Prudka (MMF '09), Czech Republic, ITI Graduate and co-organizer of the Symposium.

Since this article, ITI alumni have helped to organize two more International TOB Symposia. For future Symposia see <http://tobinternational-symposia.com>

Providing a Mouthpiece for the Church

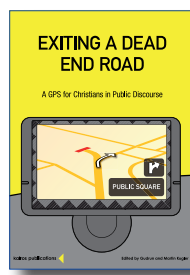
Dr. Gudrun Kugler-Lang, Austria - Gudrun graduated from the ITI in 1999. Afterwards, she completed her legal studies with a doctorate in International Criminal Law. From 2001 to 2004 she directed the World Youth Alliance Europe (www.wya.net), advocating human dignity at the United Nations and the European Union. In 2005, she and her husband, Martin, founded the enterprise, Kairos Consulting for Non-Profit-Initiatives. With this company, she has; started the non-governmental organization, Europe for Christ! (www.europe4christ.net); helped launch a European Observatory on Christianophobia and Intolerance; and founded the German speaking Catholic marriage web-site, www.kathtreff.org. In addition to these initiatives, she is very much in demand for many conferences as a speaker on the Culture of Life. ✂



Alumna Publishes Landmark Book *Exiting a Dead End Road. A GPS for Christians in Public Discourse*

ITI faculty member and alumna, Gudrun Kugler, together with her husband Martin, recently published the book, *Exiting a Dead End Road. A GPS for Christians in Public Discourse*. In describing the book, Gudrun writes:

“In the public debate today, Christians quickly encounter a ‘dead end road’: Of course, no one should be discriminated against – but is *anti-discrimination legislation* a good idea? Why do many call Christians *intolerant*, isn’t it the Christians’ positions which are not being tolerated? *Exiting a Dead End Road. A GPS for Christians in Public Discourse* discusses the main questions of public interest in a concise and accessible format. Distinguished experts offer their analysis and solutions to questions such as: “What’s Wrong With the West?” (Robert George, Bill Saunders), “Dealing with Political Correctness” (Marguerite Peeters), “Comprehending Freedom and Tolerance” (Rocco Buttiglione), and “Ways Out of the Ghetto” (Joseph Weiler), along with many other insightful essays. ✂



(2011, Kairos Publications, edited by Gudrun and Martin Kugler). You can order the book or download the e-Book at: www.IntoleranceAgainstChristians.eu

Caring for the Sick

An ITI Graduate at Work



The Dmytryshyn Family. Stefan (STL '05) was appointed head of the Interdiocesan Commission of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church for Pastoral Health Care.

From time to time, we like to write about the accomplishments of some of our graduates and the tremendous difference that they are making when they return to their native countries. One such graduate is Stefan Dmytryshyn.

Stefan graduated from the ITI with a Sacred Theology Licentiate in May 2005. Stefan is married, and he and his wife, Uly-

ana, have two children, Olena and Yaroslav. After graduating, he started working for the Interdiocesan Commission of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church for Pastoral Health Care, and he was soon after appointed head of the Commission.

In 2004, by a special decree of the head of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church (UGCC), the Interdiocesan Commission of the UGCC for Pastoral Health Care was established. It was called to develop and to provide for the mission of the Church in the health care system of Ukraine. During the time of the Soviet Union, any such mission on the part of the Church was forbidden. There were no hospital chaplains, there was no formal contact or cooperation between medical institutions and the Church, and there was no affirmation of Christian values in the health care system.

The tasks of the Commission are fivefold. The first and most basic of these is to establish cooperation between religious, public, and state organizations which work in health care. The second is to spread the Church's teachings on man and the meaning of his suffering. The third is to affirm Christian values in medical and educational institutions, and in the Ukrainian legislature. The fourth is to promote the development of a responsible and respectful attitude toward the dignity of every patient. And finally, the last task is to monitor problems in the health care system, especially those related to the quality and conditions of medical treatments. The tasks set

before the Commission pose a tremendous challenge.

Through pastoral activity, the Commission has developed and organized a pastoral health care network which formed a commission for pastoral health care in every diocese of the UGCC in Ukraine. These commissions work on the local level to enact the work of the Interdiocesan Commission. Through academic and educational activity, the Commission conducts specialized seminars for clergy and medical workers, and organizes conferences on topics such as the vocation to serve the sick.

The Commission has also translated and published Church documents and handbooks on pastoral health care. For example, it recently published the Apostolic Letter of Pope John Paul II entitled *Salvifici Doloris* and a book entitled *Mosaic of Mercy* by Fr. Arnaldo Pangrazzi. Both of these works discuss the identity of the Church's mission in the field of health care.

At the suggestion of the Commission, the UGCC Bishops' Conference established an annual celebration of the Day of the Sick. On this day, the Church in Ukraine prays for all those who are sick, their families and those medical personnel who care for them.

The Commission has made significant progress since its establishment. For those who live in the West, the presence of a chaplain in the local hospital is expected. Yet, in those countries that were formerly part of the Soviet Union, there is often no such chaplain since the Church was not allowed to be involved with health care for such a long time. And so, perhaps one of the most important and significant challenges before the Commission lies in the legalization of the medical chaplaincy in Ukraine.

The Commission works hard to help the UGCC Conference of Bishops develop initiatives that would advance this much-needed legalization. In October 2008, the UGCC Conference of Bishops approved two documents regarding medical chaplaincy that were prepared by the Commission. These are the "Statute on Chaplains for the Medical Institution" and the "Instruction Concerning the Ministry of the Holy Sacraments in Medical Institutions."

As head of the Interdiocesan Commission, Stefan Dmytrshyn has his work cut out for him. But Stefan knows that he is not alone in his work. As he recently wrote, "God's Providence appointed me as head (of the Commission), and my ITI formation and education help me with this job and my life. The many principles that I learned in the ITI guide and assist me to reflect the teachings of the Church in my daily work." ✂

For those who live in the West, the presence of a chaplain in the local hospital is expected. Yet, in those countries that were formerly part of the Soviet Union, there is often no such chaplain since the Church was not allowed to be involved with health care for such a long time.

ITI Grad Awarded John

Templeton Award for Theological Promise



Lyra Pitstick named as recipient of the John Templeton Award for Theological Promise

Congratulations to ITI graduate, Dr. Alyssa (Lyra) Pitstick (STM '00, STL '02), who was named as one of twelve international recipients of the 2009 "John Templeton Award for Theological Promise." The recipients are selected by members of an international, interdisciplinary, and multi-religious committee of scholars based upon the applicants' doctoral dissertation or first post-doctoral book. The book Lyra submitted was the revised version of the doctoral dissertation she did at

the Angelicum in Rome, which was itself a greatly developed extension of her final thesis at the International Theological Institute in Austria.

Lyra is a member of the religion faculty at Hope College in Holland, Michigan, USA. Their press release about the award states:

HOLLAND – Dr. Alyssa (Lyra) Pitstick of the Hope College religion faculty is one of only 12 young scholars worldwide to receive a 2009 "John Templeton Award for Theological Promise."

The recipients are recognized on the basis of their doctoral dissertations related to the topic of God and spirituality, and chosen by an international and inter-religious panel of 25 judges. Each recipient receives an award of \$10,000 plus an additional stipend of up to \$10,000 for two years to support giving public lectures at the invitation of academic institutions.

The award program is a cooperative effort of the Research Center of International and Interdisciplinary Theology of the University of Heidelberg in Germany and the John Templeton Foundation of Pennsylvania. The winners will be honored during an awards ceremony and also participate in a colloquium at the university in May. The international mix of scholars includes six based in the U.S.; three in Germany; and one each in Denmark, Scotland and Norway.

Pitstick wrote her dissertation while completing her doctorate in sacred theology at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome, Italy, in 2005. In 2007, it was published by the Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company of Grand Rapids as *Light in Darkness: Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Catholic Doctrine of Christ's Descent into Hell*.

Both before and after its publication, her critique of von Balthasar has been the subject of vigorous debate. After an intense exchange in several issues of the journal *First Things*, its founder, the recently deceased Rev. Richard John Neuhaus, called Pitstick “a first-rate theological talent.” More recently, she responded to a scholarly panel on her book at the annual meeting of the Karl Barth Society.

Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-88) was a Swiss priest and religious scholar who saw Christ’s descent into hell following his crucifixion as at the “absolute center” of the Christian faith. In her work, Pitstick draws on multiple sources to consider how von Balthasar’s perspective, in differing from traditional teaching on Christ’s descent into hell, jeopardizes essential Christian doctrines on God, Christ and salvation. Her work thus ultimately has implications relevant to the spiritual, liturgical and practical lives of Christians of all denominations.

“New Blackfriars” praised Pitstick’s work: “An impressive book. Pitstick has had the courage to challenge a major theological reputation head on, and has done so with great skill. The result is the most sustained and detailed criticism of Balthasar’s theology yet published in English, and a work of acute argument in its own right.”

John Saward of Oxford University noted that “Pitstick’s book is a challenge to those who regard Balthasar as an entirely trustworthy theologian, ranking with the greatest masters of the Tradition. She subjects his understanding of Christ’s descent into hell to a searching critique and shows it to be seriously at odds with the teaching of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church.”

Pitstick joined the Hope faculty at the beginning of the current school year. Besides her doctorate, she holds degrees in philosophy and mathematics. She presently teaches an introduction to Catholicism and a course called “Dracula Meets the Pope: Classic Horror Fiction and a Catholic Christian View of the Human Person.” She continues to pursue research on topics related to Christ’s Descent and, more recently, the Book of Job.

The mission of the John Templeton Foundation is to pursue new insights at the boundary between theology and science through a rigorous, open-minded and empirically focused methodology, drawing together talented representatives from a wide spectrum of fields of expertise. Founded in 1987, the foundation annually provides more than \$60 million in funding on behalf of work in human sciences and character development, science and theology research, as well as free enterprise programs and awards worldwide. The John Templeton Award for Theological Promise was first announced in 2005. ✂

Her critique of von Balthasar has been the subject of vigorous debate... Rev. Richard John Neuhaus, called Pitstick “a first-rate theological talent.”



Father Yuriy Kolasa

Fighting the Marriage Crisis

Success in Ukraine

ITI graduate, Rev. Yuriy Kolasa, a Byzantine Catholic priest from Ukraine, has spent many years fighting the marriage crisis in his archdiocese of Lviv. The fruits of this work are evident not only in his archdiocese, but also throughout the entire country.

After his graduation from the ITI in 2001, Father Yuriy was appointed as head of the Archdiocesan Commission of Mar-

riage and Family. In three short years, the commission set up thirteen marriage-preparation centers, published a marriage-preparation manual and prepared more than 3000 couples for matrimony. The program itself is substantially based on the guiding documents for premarital preparation given by the Pontifical Commission on Marriage and the Family. A team of people leads the meetings: a priest, a medical doctor, a psychologist, a lawyer, and a married couple bearing personal witness. After beginning in Lviv, the program was also used as a model for other dioceses of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.

The Commission soon found that this work of the Church was also affecting the state statistics—with a remarkable result. In the year 2000, the divorce rate in the Lviv region was at 54%. From the moment the Church began to implement the marriage preparation program, the situation improved. In Ukraine, young couples are the most likely to get divorced, but in the four years after the program was implemented, the rate of divorce in the Lviv region declined to 40%. In the regions of Eastern and Southern Ukraine, where the program was not implemented, the divorce rate rose to 80%.

In 2006, the program was brought to the attention of state officials as a way to overcome the family crisis in Ukraine. In January 2007, a

team of lay people started a pilot program for the state in Kyjiv, the capital of Ukraine, at one of the state offices for marriage registration. Since it is secular, the marriage preparation program developed for the state is different from the program used in the Church, yet it also aims to proclaim the truth about the human person, about genuine love, and about God.

In January 2008, after examining the program for a year and interviewing young couples who participated, state officials decided that the program should continue and be implemented in the whole city of Kyjiv. Now there are seven marriage-preparation centers in the capital of Ukraine that prepare couples who have civil weddings. If this goes well, it could be approved for the whole country. Father Yuriy began a project for his archdiocese, and he is now helping to save his country. ✂



Fr. Yuriy Kolasa with Cardinal Sandri and Cardinal Schönborn. After successfully heading the UGCC Commission of Marriage and Family in the Archdiocese of Lviv, Fr. Yuriy Kolasa (STL '07), was appointed in 2011 as the Vicar General for the faithful of Byzantine Rite in Austria.

Invigorating the Byzantine Catholic Church in Austria

In September 2011, Reverend Lic. Yuriy Kolasa was installed by Christoph Cardinal Schönborn as the new Vicar General for the faithful of the Byzantine rite in Austria. During the ceremony, Father Kolasa said, "I see this calling as an opportunity to serve the faithful of the Byzantine rite in Austria in order to give each access to the Sacraments of the Church and to guide them on the way to holiness... The diversity of Rites at the ITI has given me the chance to know and come to love the traditions of others, and to delve into the beauty and richness of the living and universal Church... I see this position as an occasion to deepen the understanding of the role and spirituality of the Eastern Catholic Churches in the universal Church."



Students making the Profession of Faith at Graduation



INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

Our Mission Statement

The mission of the ITI rests on four pillars

THE FIRST PILLAR is the founding intention of Pope John Paul II. The ITI was founded for the study of Catholic theology as a unified whole within which particular attention is devoted to the theme of marriage and the family. A solid theological formation is needed for Catholic leaders, lay and clergy, to achieve critical judgment in our culture and the capacity to contribute to the new evangelization, which is especially needed in the area of marriage and the family.

THE SECOND PILLAR of the ITI, also part of John Paul II's founding vision, is its international character, its bridge function between East and West. This international character allows a genuine experience of the universal Church, which must "breathe with both lungs" (John Paul II), East and West.

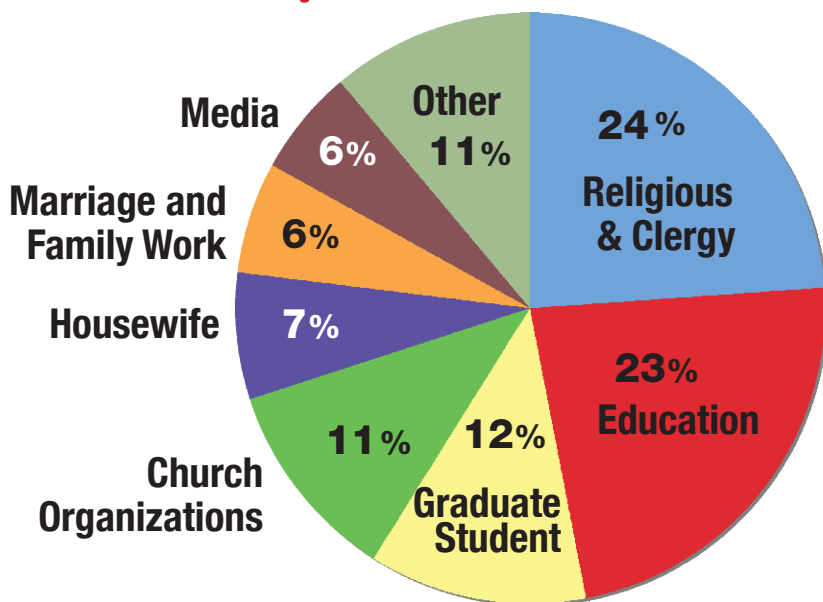
THE THIRD PILLAR of the ITI is its pedagogy, which consists in studying the original writings of the great Masters of Theology, especially the Fathers and the Doctors of the Church, in addition to Sacred Scripture. Contact with original texts develops an eye for quality, especially in theology. The great masters lead faculty and students most directly to the realities discussed in theology, above all God himself. This pedagogy also develops the virtues of active reading, attentive discussion and penetrating understanding.

THE FOURTH PILLAR of the ITI is a rich Catholic community that lives and prays together in the same place and its close vicinity. The example of the Christian family life lived by many among the faculty and students offers the most persuasive and practically helpful evidence of the beauty and practicability of that life. It also encourages the formation of religious and priestly vocations and their blossoming.

It is the simultaneous presence of these four pillars that constitutes the strength of the ITI.

For further information please visit: www.iti.ac.at
or write to us at: administration@iti.ac.at

ITI Graduate Primary Professions



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